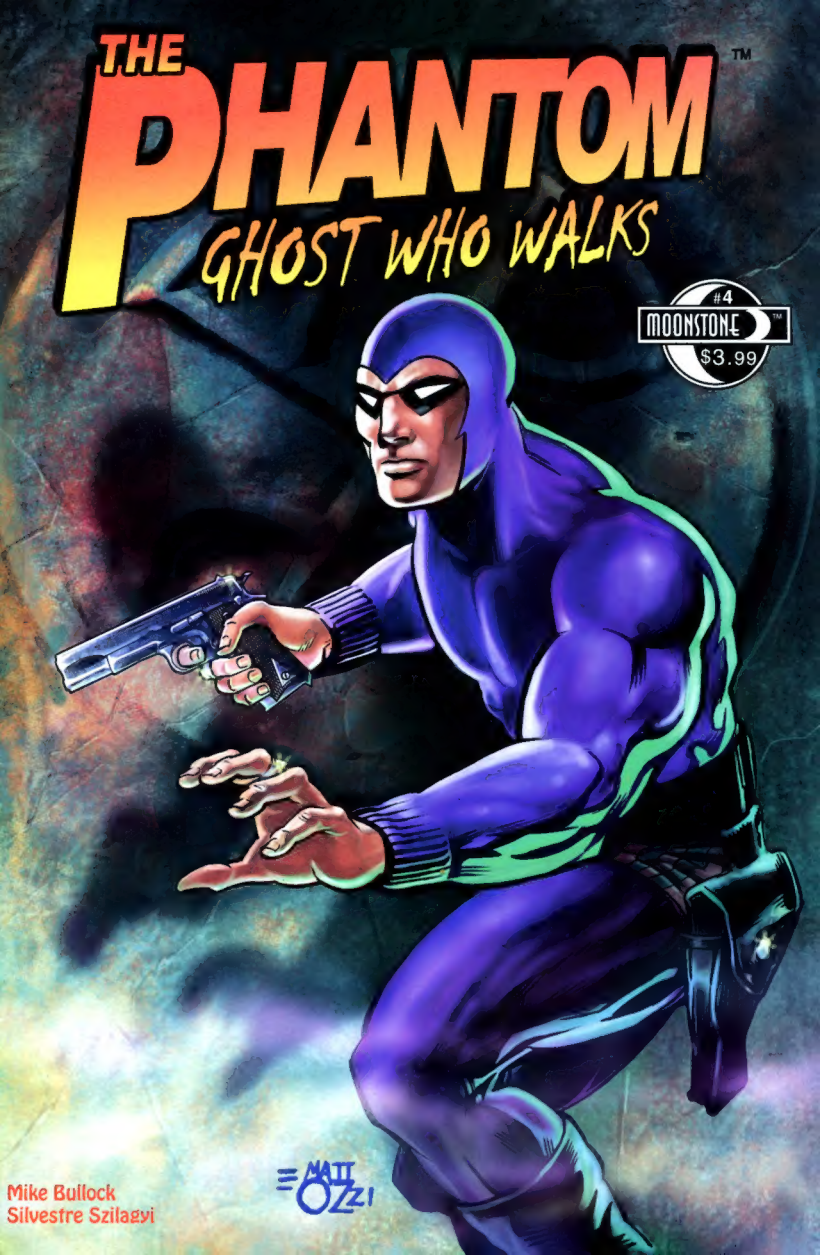

THE PHANTOM™
GHOST WHO WALKS
#4
MOONSTONE™
$3.99
MATT OZZI
Mike Bullock
Silvestre Szilagyi

THE PHANTOM™

GHOST WHO WALKS

created by LEE FALK

For those who came in late...

NEARLY 500 YEARS AGO ON A REMOTE BANGALLAN BEACH, ONLY ONE SURVIVED A VICIOUS PIRATE ATTACK.
THE FIRST PHANTOM SWORE A SACRED OATH ON THE SKULL OF HIS FATHER'S KILLER.
...WILL DEVOTE MY LIFE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF PIRACY, GREED, CRUELTY AND INJUSTICE!
GENERATION AFTER GENERATION FOLLOWED, BUT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, HE WAS ALWAYS ONE MAN... IMMORTAL.
NOW THE 21ST PHANTOM HAUNTS THE NIGHTMARES OF EVIL MEN EVERYWHERE.

"THE CHASE"

WRITTEN BY **MIKE BULLOCK**
STORY CONSULTANT **DAVID MICHELINIE**
ART BY **FERNANDO PENICHE**
COLORED BY **BOB PEDROZA**
LETTERED BY **JOSH AITKEN**
EDITS BY **DAVID MICHELINIE**
PHANTOM GROUP EDITOR BY **MIKE BULLOCK**

COVER BY EUGENIO MATTOZZI

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT *ED RHOADES*

AND TO *KAREN MOY* AT KING FEATURES

MOONSTONE is...

Joe Gentile - editor in chief
Dave Ulanski - art director
Lori G - editorial
Rory Bautista & Mike Reynolds - ground control
Kathleen O'Brien - web master
Richard Dean Starr - Special Projects Coordinator
Tim Lasiuta - Research & Development
Joe Gentile & Dave Ulanski - publishers

visit us on the web at
www.moonstonebooks.com

The Phantom: Ghost Who Walks #4 © 2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc. The Phantom is a trademark of Hearst Holdings, Inc. All rights reserved. Published by Moonstone, 582 Torrence Avenue, Calumet City, IL 60409 With the exception of review purposes, this book may not be reprinted in part or in whole without the express written consent of King Features and Moonstone. Printed in Canada

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! THE BOSS NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT A CURSE!
"THIS'LL BE EASY, DESMOND!" "YOU'LL BE IN AND OUT IN A DAY, DESMOND!"
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED IF IT WAS SO EASY, WHY HE DIDN'T BLOODY WELL DO IT HIMSELF!
WELL, AT LEAST GETTING IT WAS EASY. GETTING OUT OF HERE ALIVE SEEMS TO BE THE PART HE NEGLECTED TO MENTION...
I'VE NEVER BOUGHT INTO THESE SUPERSTITIONS, BUT I'LL BE BUGGERED IF THE HAIRS ON THE BACK OF MY NECK AREN'T SALUTING!

TWENTY MINUTES AGO.
THOSE LLONGO TRIBESMAN SEEM LIKE NASTY FELLOWS.
THE LOCALS MAY HAVE BEEN FIERCE WARRIORS...
SILLY ME FOR THINKING I WAS "OUT OF THE WOODS".
BUT THEY DIDN'T PROVE TO BE THE BEST TRACKERS.
WHAT DEVILTRY IS THIS?

I GOTTA GET TO THE DROP OFF. I'LL MAKE ENOUGH TO PAY BACK BRUNO ONCE AND FOR ALL.
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I WASN'T RUNNING.
FIVE YEARS AGO
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT! I CAN'T BELIEVE I BOTCHED THIS JOB! IT WOULD HAVE SET ALICIA AND ME UP FOR LIFE.
INSTEAD, BRUNO WANTS MY SKIN FLYING FROM THE YARDARM WITH THE REST OF MY CARCASS FED TO HIS DOGS!
I JUST HAVE TO FOCUS ON MAKING IT TO PORTUGAL, THEN BRUNO AND HIS THREATS WILL BE A MEMORY!
TWO CLIPS AND HE'S STILL COMING! BLASTED JUNGLE DEVIL!
TAK
TAK
IT'S LIKE I'M SHOOTING AT A GHOST!

NOT MUCH FARTHER!
MAYBE I GOT HIM WITH THAT LAST ROUND!
MAYBE...
BLOODY HELL!
THEY CALL THAT A BRIDGE?
WOULD IT KILL SOMEONE TO BUILD ONE OF THOSE ROPE THINGS YOU SEE IN THE MOVIES?
I CAN'T LET THIS BLIGHTER SCREW THIS FOR ME! I GOTTA LOSE 'IM!
OH, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, YOU HAVE TO BE JOKING!

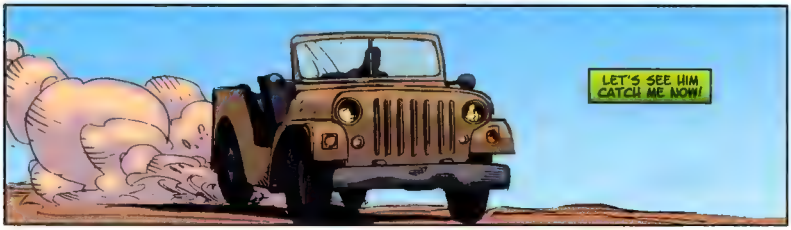
THE MAP DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT A BLOODY CLIFF!
THERE HAS TO BE A WAY DOWN!
IT'S TOO HIGH TO JUMP! IT'S TOO HIGH!!
NO!
SWISS

I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS...
AT LEAST I FINALLY LOST HIM.
NO! IT CAN'T BE!
NOTHING TO IT BUT TO KEEP RUNNING!
MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING TO THESE LOCAL SUPERSTITIONS!
MY GUN! I MUST HAVE LOST IT IN THE RIVER.
THAT SHOULD SLOW THE DEVIL!

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! THE BOSS NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT A CURSE!
"THIS'LL BE EASY, DESMOND!" "YOU'LL BE IN AND OUT IN A DAY, DESMOND!"
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED IF IT WAS SO EASY, WHY HE DIDN'T BLOODY WELL DO IT HIMSELF!
WELL, AT LEAST GETTING IT WAS EASY. GETTING OUT OF HERE ALIVE SEEMS TO BE THE PART HE NEGLECTED TO MENTION...
I'VE NEVER BOUGHT INTO THESE SUPERSTITIONS, BUT I'LL BE BUGGERED IF THE HAIRS ON THE BACK OF MY NECK AREN'T SALUTING!

LET'S SEE HIM MAKE IT THROUGH THIS.
NO WAY ANYTHING LIVING SURVIVES THAT!
NOW TO MAKE MY WAY BACK INTO ONE OF THE CARS...
PORTUGAL, AND FREEDOM, HERE I COME.
YOU! IT CAN'T BE!
GET AWAY!

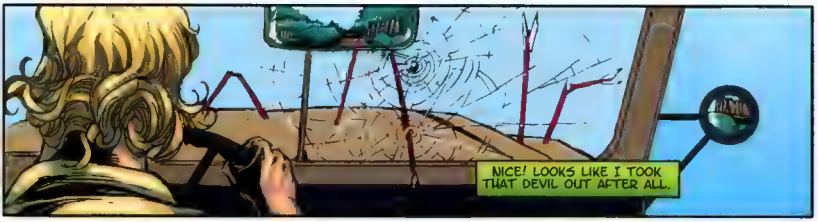
THERE'S THE JEEP! JUST AS THE BOSS PROMISED!
WHUMP

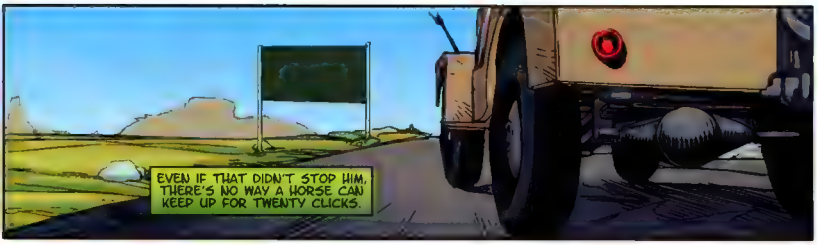

LET'S SEE HIM CATCH ME NOW!

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!
AT LEAST THIS BOSS SEEMS TO KEEP HIS WORD AND GIVE ME WHAT I NEED. IF BRUNO HAD, THEN I'D NEVER'VE NEEDED TO WORK FOR THESE SODS!

FWEEEET
WHAT NEW DEVILTRY IS THIS?
THEK
THEK
THEK
THEK
THEK
IT APPEARS MY BLOODY LUCK IS HOLDING!
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO CUT OFF THE TRAIL

THAT SHOULD DO NICELY.
D-D-UUP
KRI-BOOM
PENICHE

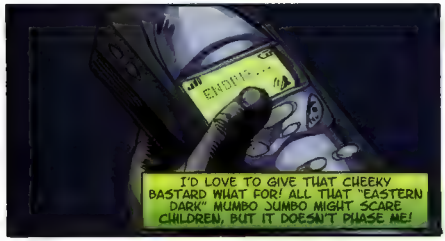

NICE! LOOKS LIKE I TOOK THAT DEVIL OUT AFTER ALL.


EVEN IF THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM, THERE'S NO WAY A HORSE CAN KEEP UP FOR TWENTY CLICKS.

I WONDER IF IT'S MADE OF PURE GOLD.
MAYBE I COULD DOUBLE OR TRIPLE WHAT THEY'RE OFFERING IF I TAKE IT TO THE BLACK MARKET IN CADIZ.
OH, WHO AM I KIDDING? I'D BUGGER THAT AND WIND UP DEAD. BEST TO COUNT MY LUCKY STARS AND STICK TO THE PLAN.

EVANT
CLIPSE
I MADE IT. ONCE THIS RUST BUCKET SETS SAIL, I'M FREE!
EVERYTHING SHOULD BE IN ORDER.
FINALLY, I CAN RELAX!
NOW FOR A NICE NAP. WE SHOULD BE IN PORTUGAL BY THE TIME I WAKE UP.

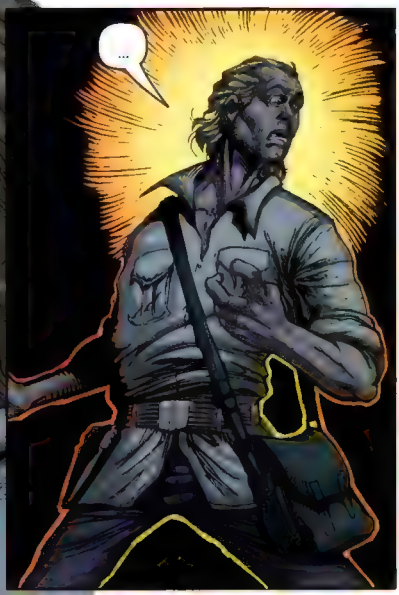
THANK GOD THE SAT-PHONE WASN'T DAMAGED IN ALL THAT.
THIS IS DESMOND. WHERE'S THE BOSS?
YES, YES. TELL HIM I'M ON THE PHONE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE'S TOO BUSY TO TALK TO ME?
BLOODY WELL RIGHT I'M TICKED OFF! I NEARLY GET WHACKED AND HE'S TOO "BUSY" TO COME TO THE PHONE?
'RIGHT! HAVE HIM CALL ME BACK.


ENDING...
I'D LOVE TO GIVE THAT CHEEKY BASTARD WHAT FOR! ALL THAT "EASTERN DARK" MUMBO JUMBO MIGHT SCARE CHILDREN, BUT IT DOESN'T PHASE ME!

NEXT TIME HE CAN STEAL HIS OWN IDOL!

CALM DOWN, DESMOND! I CAN'T LET MY TEMPER JEOPARDIZE THE FUTURE AGAIN!

CLANK


...

GET YOURSELF TOGETHER, DES!
ALICIA WILL GET A GOOD LAUGH AT THIS, DESMOND ROURKE, JUMPING AT SHADOWS.
CLANK
WHAT?!
I'M LOSING MY BLOODY MIND!

CLANK
RIGHT
K-BENG
KERCHK
BUGGER ME! THE BLOODY LIGHTS DON'T WORK?
IS THERE A TORCH IN HERE OR SOMETHING?
...
THAT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU.

NO! NO! NO!
KA-CHANG
KLUNG
KLUNG
KLUNG
AAAUH!
I DON'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS! I DON'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS!
I'LL BLOODY KILL YOU!

SHOW YOURSELF, DEVIL!
A-A-AFRAID TO F-FACE MY GUN, ARE WE?
CLANK
W-WHAT ARE Y-YOU?
A NIGHTMARE...
DIE!
CLICK

ARRGGG!!!
AAAAAAUUU!
KRUNCH
KRUNCH!

WHA-
NOOOO!!
ONCE YOU HIT THOSE PROPELLERS, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THEY'LL ONLY CUT YOU TO RIBBONS.
WHICH MEANS YOU'LL STILL BE ALIVE WHEN THE SHARKS FIND YOU.
NO PLEASE! NO! WHATEVER YOU WANT!
WHATEVER YOU WANT!

I WANT TO KNOW WHO SENT YOU.
NO! THEY'LL KILL ME!
NOT IF THE SHARKS GET YOU FIRST.
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! HE DIDN'T TELL ME HIS NAME, JUST THAT HE WAS FROM SOMETHING CALLED "THE EASTERN DARK"! WHATEVER THE BLOODY HELL THAT IS!
WHUMP
WHAT ARE YOU?
BUGGER ME!
Not the End

The Stage and the Comic Strips

Writing for the Phantom can be complicated. The most sincere writers first consulted Lee Falk's work, which stand as a template for how good action strips unfold. There are no drama shots in the daily newspapers, although after Lee's death, on the week of his birthday, the newspaper ran the continuation of the last story that Lee worked on, Mrs. Falk did an entire week of one-panel dailies just establishing a little drama.

It was unorthodox for a long time strip to change formats even the slightest… some papers used to split the images to allow the strip to occupy some square corner on the page. It defied the conventions of normal comic strip presentation, but the authoress for the parts Lee left behind, shared with Lee a love of drama. Under Lee's hands, the stories drew from the well of drama and Lee's first love of theatre was evident in the Phantom strips. He wrote scenes, he wrote dialog, and he told stories.

Lee's written work wasn't confined to the comic pages of a newspaper. He wrote novels, short stories… and plays. One of my regrets in life is that I was unable to take him up on his offer to attend a reading of *Home At Six* at the Players Club. Lee was proud of his work beyond *The Phantom* and *Mandrake the Magician*, and there is no doubt that the theatre was his first love. Lee told me initially that he only expected to write comics for a couple years and then go on to theatre.

The artists complained that he was often late with his script forcing them to scramble. It's likely that he was absorbed in some theatrical production in which he was involved causing him to fall behind on deadlines… but, it was that love and involvement with theatre which made his comic strip different. You could see it especially in the early days of comics (The Phantom debuted 2/17/1936) when more space was allowed on the printed page for dialog. The Phantom's beginnings were more ornate with greater complexity, then as newspapers began reducing the allotted size, Lee told me that he began to condense his writing "to allow more room for the art."

There is a format for a daily strip. Saturday should have the cliffhanger panel to make the reader eager for the next week. Monday is a review of Saturday for transition sake… and, so the writer has basically four days to move the strip forward.

In the context of two to four two-inch high panels, the story unfolds within rigid confines of the medium almost like a kind of haiku where every word must mean the most.

It's interesting that one of Lee's popular plays *Home at Six* draws from a reduction experiment. The entire play is written in one syllable words. Yet the story unfolds so seamlessly and gracefully that it's not apparent. In contrast to his famous newspaper strips, this is an adult comedy that is highly entertaining.

Just as the demeanor of the theatrical productions from Lee's theatres varied from romantic comedy, to action story, to detective story, to mystery, to serious romance, to sci fi and fantasy, so did his treatment of the Phantom. In the comic strips, he pitted humorous characterizations and pairings like the Marshal Sisters, a pair of young scheming admirers who always cause trouble in the Phantom's life. He infused the realm of fantasy upon occasion, visitors from space, and a centuries old woman inspired by H. Rider Haggard's *She*. He borrowed from a traditional Greek Comedy Lysistrata for one Sunday Phantom story. He drew inspiration from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Clifford Odets, and William Shakespeare. His oath of the skull looks just like a scene from Hamlet. In fact one early story shows the son of Phantom contemplate ending the Phantom line to be an actor in Shakespeare's troupe.

These days the mediums have changed. You hear words on broadcast TV that shock the older generation, and comic books that can be very edgy may have better survival rates. However, the newspaper comic strip is still family oriented and expected to be appropriate to accompany a cup of coffee and a donut. Comic strips are dinosaurs. We're pleased and surprised they're still with us, but in recent years, we've lost some great artists and a few comic strips as well. Now, most of the fare is gag a day humor strips, and the few remaining continuity strips are slowly fading away. When our local editor updated the comics page, he was asked why he keeps *The Phantom*. His response was that he didn't want to anger a reader and have himself staked to an African ant mound.

There are creative ideas from Lee that would not work on a comic strip newspaper page. An example of such a story is found in Lee's other popular play, *Eris*. It is a chilling character study of persuasive malevolence with amazing dialog.

Lee's work on comics drew on his theatre experiences, and he shared some of those memories at our luncheons. In the course of owning six playhouses, Lee's productions featured notables like Charlton Heston, Marlon Brando, Basil Rathbone, Chico Marx, Paul Robeson, Paul Newman, James Mason, Eve Arden, Ethel Waters, Shelley Winters, Eva Marie Saint, and Eva Gabor.

Lee's wife, Elizabeth, directs operas. Lee wrote twelve plays and two musicals. During the years of owning theatres, Lee was responsible for over 300 stage productions, directing a third of them. He was a world traveler, an avid reader and a man whose life was entwined in theatre. That he did find time to continue writing so many comic strips is remarkable. That he had the ability to infuse his stories with the experience of a playwright enriched the world of comics.

The Ghost Who Dies

By

Clay & Susan Griffith

Africa. 1896.

The jungle was alive and conversing. Trees creaked in the motionless heat; animals chattered and squawked in the heavy foliage; insects buzzed and hummed from their dark hideaways. In contrast, the man who crept through the tangled vines kept his movements slow and precise. Nothing knew he passed this way.

He was hunting.

And his prey was just ahead. His hand dropped to the ground and lightly touched the imprint by his foot. Water had not yet collected in the indentations. He was close. A few minutes more and the track would have had a liquid puddle in it seeping up from the damp ground. A few hours later and the heat of the jungle would have dried it till it was hard and baked. Yes, he was very close.

The hunter was a professional. Trained by one who came before him, skilled in the arts of detection and fighting. It was his destiny after all, passed on from generation to generation. And yet he still exercised caution. His prey was intelligent and deadly, quite capable of turning the odds on him. There wasn't a more dangerous prey alive than that which he hunted.

He could just see a shape through the tangle of brush ahead, a dark shadow that moved despite the windless day. Finally he had his quarry.

There was only one thing that separated this hunter and hunted. One was in the right while the other was in the wrong. He had been taught from birth to fight for what he believed in, guard against usurpers, and defend oneself from those that seek him harm. That which he hunted had stolen something precious and must be punished. None can enter this domain and betray the laws that have been in place for centuries. No one was above the law.

He eased his pistol from its holster. In truth he did not like to use the weapon. He much more preferred to use his wits and fists, but some prey was too dangerous to leave to chance.

Suddenly he heard a snap of twigs and everything quieted. Birds stopped their

discussions, earthbound animals paused in their breath, all listening for danger.

The hunter froze with them. He cast his gaze to his left without moving his head. He could just make out something moving on his flank.

There was no more time. The hunter took aim and fired.

* * *

The Ghost Who Walks spun as a bullet impacted on the tree in front of his face. Fragments of wood exploded outward like searing blades. One sliced along his cheek drawing blood. Apparently, he was not alone in the jungle. He fell silently to the ground. Every sense was tuned to the jungle. Normally it told him all he needed to know, but suddenly the forest was deathly quiet, refusing to tell him where his attacker was. It meant that his foe was intelligent enough to know how to make the jungle keep his secrets. It meant that his attacker was as good as he. It meant trouble.

The crack of a second shot split the air. The Phantom jerked to the side as the bullet burned a furrow across his shoulder. That was a rifle shot. And the bullet came from an entirely new direction. He was up in the trees. Smart.

Maybe too smart. This was no ordinary man that pursued him. He was skilled in the hunt, and had the gall to think he could best the Phantom in his own home. That was extraordinary in itself. But the enemies of the Ghost Who Walks were endless after so many centuries, and blood feuds could run through many lineages just like his own bloodline. It was time to see how smart this hunter really was.

* * *

The hunter had taken the second shot anyway, despite the fact that he had lost the advantage. His target stumbled, but didn't go down. Two shots and two near misses. The Phantom was extraordinary; his senses were so keen he moved just at the point when the trigger was being squeezed. Like a jungle cat sensing a coming attack.

A flash of purple slashed beneath the hunter's position, but the thick foliage didn't afford him a shot. The hunter jumped from limb to limb, darting after the Phantom, hoping to cut off his retreat, perhaps herd his prey back toward a clearer area.

The Phantom's strength saw him through and he disappeared into the tangled shadows of the thick forest. The hunter pulled up, knowing that pursuing pell-mell onto his target's ground wasn't wise. He rested his rifle in the cross of his arms.

Years of labor and planning, and five days patient stalking, and he had blown it all in seconds with his carelessness. Next time he would not be so reckless. The first kill jitters had been exorcised. The next time the Phantom would not be so lucky.

Now the hunter had to make good his withdrawal from the field. The Phantom, though wounded, would not let him escape easily. But his own skills rivaled the ghost of the jungle. He kept to the trees. Their thick foliage afforded him cover. The myriad of crisscrossing branches and tangled creepers offered him a multitude of routes in this jungle highway.

Dark purple moved not more than ten meters below. The hunter stopped abruptly and watched as the man he had hunted snaked up into the trees as fluidly as if he had been born there. The hunter melted back into the green; the color of his clothes were chosen specifically for this region's vegetation. He barely breathed knowing that the Phantom's search was not as easy as it would be on the jungle floor. There was no way to know how high the hunter had climbed. The Phantom not only had to look horizontally, but vertically too. It increased the odds in favor of the hunter. It was an old trick passed on down through the line which gave advantage to the Phantom over his enemies, made him a god on the field of battle. But the hunter knew these

tricks and could play them as well as any Phantom.

The hunter debated taking another shot but the angle was wrong and the Phantom was on alert. Before, the Phantom had moved with confidence on his home ground; now he realized he could not be so bold. But he was also a master of the hidden, and within seconds the Phantom faded from the hunter's sight. This Phantom was so eerily skilled. It gave the hunter chills. And filled him with pride.

* * *

It wasn't until the jungle came alive again that the Phantom realized his stalker had escaped. Either he had gone so deeply to ground that the forest forgot about him or he was long gone. The Phantom searched for signs, but all he discovered was a single trail leading toward the river that soon vanished.

The assassin had left no trace, a ghost onto himself.

The Phantom turned toward home, wisely deciding to take an alternate route that he rarely used. It was disturbing to face an adversary so capable and so close to home. He had only been a mile or so away from Skull Cave. It made the Phantom shudder to think what could have happened if the attack had occurred there. No, actually it made him angry. What if he had had a family and they had been there waiting, unsuspecting? He bristled. It was a good thing he had never gotten around to creating a family. The thought of their vulnerability made him ill.

Someone dared to invade his home and strike him in the only place on Earth where he felt safe. Surely the would-be assassin would strike again.

* * *

The hunter did not feel secure till he was on his boat with the engine thrumming, steadily churning him out to sea. He needed to put distance between himself and his enemy. The Bangalla coast was fading into the darkness, so he left the rail and went to his cabin.

The hunter's cabin was filled with memorabilia, mostly from his mother collected from her adventures, keepsakes from the days when she fought her own adversaries. He traveled with them everywhere. Her photograph rested between the Azande chief's headdress and the Zulu witchdoctor's bone necklace. Her long hair was tied back. She wore the costume. He used to think it was a silly outfit. It was not an outfit one would wear at the end of the 19th century without a few disapproving eyes. But now all he wanted was to wear it for himself. Because he was supposed to wear it. It was his.

He slammed his fist against the bulkhead. He had his chance and he had ruined it. His mother had trained him better than that. She would be ashamed of his failure.

His arm swept across the desk beside him, shoving the artifacts off in a fit of rage.

"I'm sorry, Mother." His fist's clenched. "I won't fail again. This is what you wanted for me. It will be mine soon. I swear it!"

He paced back and forth in his cramped cabin, seething at the situation. He had to start again. His next attack must be more cunning. He would not catch the Phantom unaware in the forest again. If he couldn't go to his target, he would bring his target to him. And then the Phantom would pay with his life for what he had stolen.

* * *

The drums announced turmoil in the village of the Bangalla chief. The Phantom's arrival only seemed to exacerbate their anxiety. He noted spears bristling in the crowd. Never a good sign.

Chief Mutesa approached with a stern expression as the Phantom dismounted his steed. Dropping the reins, knowing the horse would remain where he was until he was needed, the Phantom greeted his old friend, Mutesa, grown grayer and thinner, but still carrying the physical memories of the powerful man he had been. He wore the leopard skin of his rank and his hair was intricately braided and greased. He was unarmed, carrying only a lion hair whisk.

"Honorable Mutesa. Lord of the Bangalla. What has happened here?"

The chief arched an eyebrow. "You do not know, Ghost Who Walks?"

"No."

"Then that is good news." Mutesa waved him into a nearby hut which the Phantom knew belonged to Nzige, a young shaman.

Inside the hut, the cold body of a young man lay on the floor. Death came from an obvious bullet wound in his chest. It was Nzige.

"What happened?" the Phantom asked.

"He was apparently executed." Mutesa looked down at his feet. "By you."

Shock radiated through the Ghost Who Walks as a murmur arose from the crowd gathered in the doorway of the hut. His eyes scanned the floor. The packed red dirt was disturbed by only two sets of footprints, both wearing Bangalla sandals. "How many people have been in here since the body was discovered?"

"Two," the chief answered. "Myself and my son."

The Phantom regarded Mutesa. "I don't execute criminals. You know that."

"That is truth to me, but there were witnesses."

"Who? Are we sure they're reliable?"

"My son. And my own eyes."

"You? Mutesa, you saw me kill Nzige?"

"No." The old man did not lower his head. But there was pain in his eyes. His voice was low to keep his words away from the crowd outside. "But I saw you leaving his hut after I heard the sound of the gun. I cannot explain it."

"I can't either," the Phantom said. "Not yet anyway."

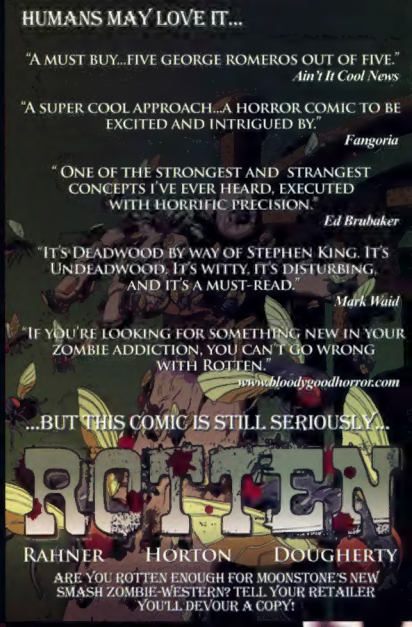
This was bad, the Phantom thought. Mutesa was the most honest man he had ever known. Clearly, the old chief was troubled by what he had seen, and what he was saying now. The Phantom wasn't overly troubled by the specifics of a murder accusation because he didn't kill Nzige. But more disturbing were the ripples of suspicion that would emanate from the Bangalla if this story gained strength. Reputation was everything. Appearance was reality. Killing defeated his purpose and went against what he stood for. The Bangalla had always understood that and, though he walked with the status of a god in their eyes, if they thought he could betray his beliefs, that he killed Nzige, it would lessen their faith in him. Plus the Phantom had no quarrel with Nzige. The young sorcerer had been a bit of a firebrand; he had even preached violence on occasion. But the Phantom would not have shown his disapproval with a bloody execution.

The Phantom regarded Chief Mutesa with an unwavering stare. "Nzige didn't die by my hand. I swear it."

TO BE CONTINUED!

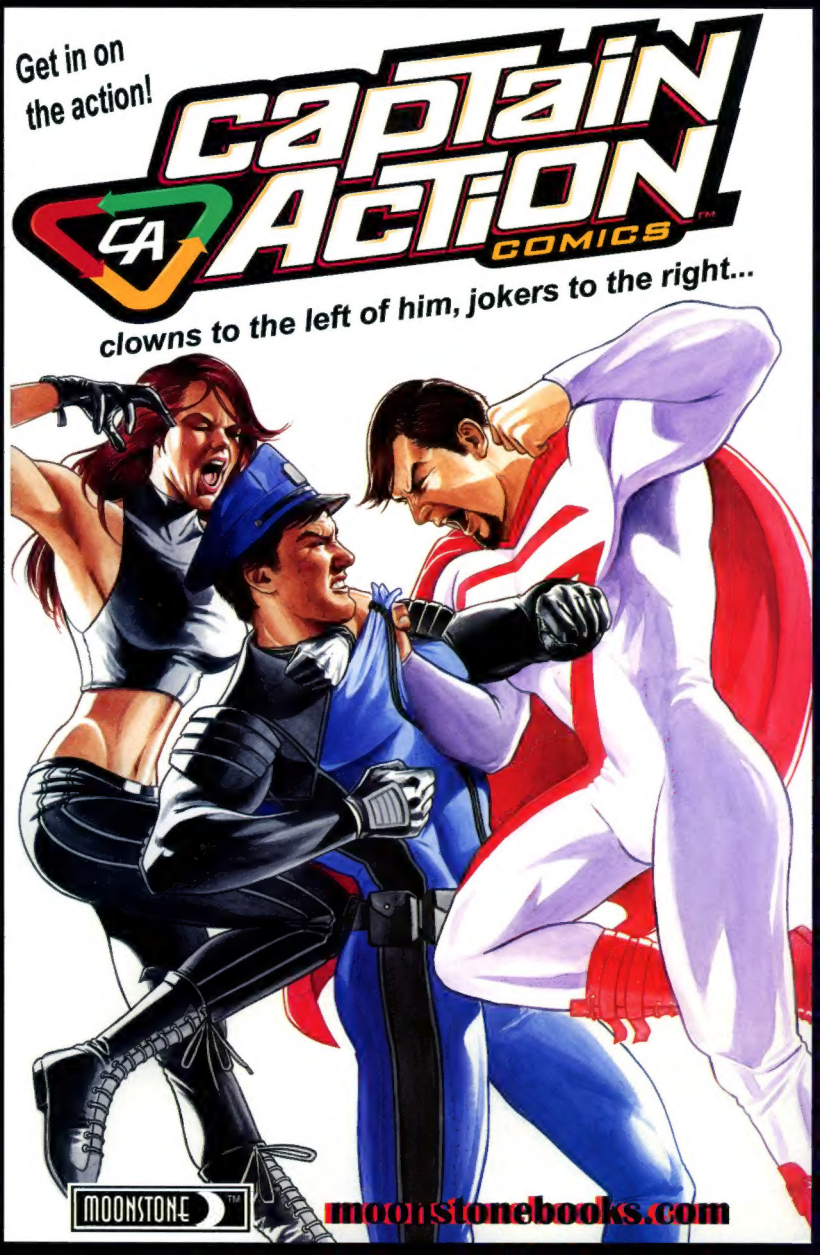
If you want to read more Phantom prose stories, visit www.moonstonebooks.com, and order The Phantom Chronicles for a bunch of new Phantom stories!

Domino Lady
She's AVAILABLE NOW!
MOONSTONE
NEW ON-GOING Sexy-Noir Series
by NY Times Best-selling author
and Buffy novelist NANCY HOLDER!


HUMANS MAY LOVE IT...
"A MUST BUY...FIVE GEORGE ROMEROS OUT OF FIVE."
Ain't It Cool News
"A SUPER COOL APPROACH...A HORROR COMIC TO BE EXCITED AND INTRIGUED BY."
Fangoria
" ONE OF THE STRONGEST AND STRANGEST CONCEPTS I'VE EVER HEARD, EXECUTED WITH HORRIFIC PRECISION."
Ed Brubaker
"IT'S DEADWOOD BY WAY OF STEPHEN KING. IT'S UNDEADWOOD. IT'S WITTY, IT'S DISTURBING, AND IT'S A MUST-READ."
Mark Waid
"IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW IN YOUR ZOMBIE ADDICTION, YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH ROTTEN."
www.bloodygoodhorror.com
...BUT THIS COMIC IS STILL SERIOUSLY...
ROTTEN
RAHNER HORTON DOUGHERTY
ARE YOU ROTTEN ENOUGH FOR MOONSTONE'S NEW SMASH ZOMBIE-WESTERN? TELL YOUR RETAILER YOU'LL DEVOUR A COPY!

MOONSTONE
BUCKAROO BANZAI
"...a bold, titillating mix of particle physics, rock & roll, super-sonic speed, beautiful women, and villians beyond redemption."
moonstonebooks.com

THE SPIDER
JUDGEMENT KNIGHT
MOONSTONE
New on-going series!
AVAILABLE NOW


Get in on the action!
CA
Captain Action
COMICS
clowns to the left of him, jokers to the right...
MOONSTONE
moonstonebooks.com

00411
8 91847 00228 5
THE PHANTOM
KOLCHAK: the Night Stalker
AIRBOY
MOONSTONE MONSTERS
DOC SAVAGE
BUCKAROO BANZAI
CAPTAIN ACTION
ZORRO
WWW.MOONSTONEBOOKS.COM

A GREEN GIANT SCAN